

ANNAPOLIS, June 7th 1837.

To His Excellency the Governor,
and the Hon. the Council of Maryland.

Gentlemen:

Since your last adjournment I had the honor to receive your commission, constituting me director of the Digest of the statutes of this state.

Aware of the magnitude and necessity of the work, and of the anxiety so often manifested by the legislature and by the people, for its speedy completion, in determining to undertake it, I have deemed it necessary to surrender altogether my professional pursuits so that undivided attention may be given to this weighty task. This has been done, and I since have been much engaged in preparation and preliminary arrangements, and now it seems to me fit and necessary that there should be between us such intercourse, as may ascertain and settle, under the powers given to you by the 5th and 6th sections of resolution 63 of 1834, the terms on which the work shall be executed so that there may hereafter exist no subject of complaints, uneasiness or incertitude.

Upon a careful examination of that resolution, and particularly, of the first and fourth clauses of the fourth section, I have arrived at the conclusion that the main design of the legislature was that the statutes should be *speedily* and *completely* revised, collated and digested under appropriate titles with a full index, by a competent person appointed as the director, with such aid as might be found necessary to *ensue a prompt accomplishment of the work*, and as it provided that the work of every assistant shall be submitted to the director, and corrected or enlarged by additional suggestions, as to him may appear proper, and thereafter laid before the legislature with a report 'presenting all his views and every information in his power' he being evidently held responsible for the perfect execution of the whole work, it appears to my humble judgment that the work of others can in no wise exonerate him from the necessity of personally revising, collating and digesting every branch of the law; and that if important titles or divisions be assigned, to his associates for *preliminary* work, delay, rather than speedy accomplishment, must be the inevitable result—to say nothing of the painful and invidious task it would impose of him of revising and criticizing the labours of his professional brethren.

I conclude then that it was the design of the legislature, in authorising the appointment of revisors to act under the direction of him, principally charged with and responsible for the work, to provide appropriate means which he might, in his discretion, use, as a due regard to the public interest and his own general avocations might render proper. Time and experience will however more clearly shew whether and to what extent it will comport with the object of the legislature, for the director to distribute the different titles and subjects of the work to others for preparation, and this will be to me the subject of careful reflection and probably of conference with the gentlemen who have been or may be selected to give aid where it